

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 583

INFO USUN NEW YORK 1590

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 6662

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, MILA, EAID, ICRC, CG

SUBJECT: GOZ PRISONERS IN SHABA AND KIVU

REF: KINSHASA 6242

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS THAT GOZ IS HOLDING UP TO 2,000 PRISONERS AS A RESULT OF HOSTILITIES AND AFTERMATH IN SHABA. REPORTED GOZ PLANS TO RESETTLE MANY OF THESE PRISONERS IN NORTH SHABA IN THE VICINITY OF THE USAID RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT NEAR KONGOLO APPARENTLY WERE CANCELLED WHEN THE AMBASSADOR DREW PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S ATTENTION TO THE PROPOSAL. SEVERAL HUNDRED PRISONERS MAY HAVE BEEN RESETTLED IN KIVU. ICRC IS FOLLOWING PRISONER ISSUE CLOSELY. END SUMMARY.

2. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL, PARA 7, ICRC DELEGATE FREDERICK STEINEMANN HAS BEEN DEVOTING ATTENTION TO THE QUESTION OF PRISONERS TAKEN BY GOZ FORCES DURING AND AFTER THE RECENT OUBREAK OF
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HOSTILITIES IN SHABA. MORE RECENTLY, THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS FROM THE CONSULATE IN LUBUMBASHI AND FROM AMERICAN PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THE AID NORTH SHABA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT THAT GOZ IS HOLDING AS MANY AS 2,000 PRISONERS IN THE VICINITY OF LUBUMBASHI AND IS LOOKING FOR RESETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES.

3. CONSULATE AT LUBUMBASHI ON JUNE 19 ALERTED EMBASSY TO POSSIBILITY THAT GOZ INTENDED TO RESETTLE 2,000 PRISONERS IN KONGOLO AREA IN VICINITY OF MAKUTANO (2730E/0515S). ACCORDING TO REPORTS RECEIVED FROM CHARLIE SWEET, ACTING DURECTOR OF AID NORTH SHABA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (PNS), DEPUTY MILITARY GOVERNOR COLONEL SASSA VISITED KONGOLO ON JUNE 17. SASSA TOLD AID PERSONNEL THERE THAT WITHIN A FEW DAYS ABOUT 500 PRISONERS WOULD BE ARRIVING IN KONGOLO FROM LUBUMBASHI ABOARD MILITARY AIRCRAFT. HE SAID PRISONERS WOULD BE KEPT INITIALLY IN PRISON CAMPS UNDER MILITARY SUPERVISION AND SUBSEQUENTLY BE RESETTLED IN NORTH SHABA AREA. PRISONERS WHO TRIED TO ESCAPE WOULD BE SHOT. EVENTUALLY, HE SAID, 2,000 PRISONERS WOULD BE SENT TO THE KONGOLO AREA. RESETTLED PRISONERS WOULD RECEIVE ENOUGH FOOD FROM RED CROSS TO LAST UNTIL NOVEMBER, AT WHICH TIME THEY SHOULD HAVE BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT ON LANDS ALLOTTED TO THEM BY ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT. COLONEL SASSA STATED THAT SIMILAR PROGRAM HAD ALREADY BEGUN FOR 700 PRISONERS IN KINDU AREA OF KIVU.

4. IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH NORTH SHABA PROJECT AID PERSONNEL, COLONEL SASSA SOUGHT THEIR ASSISTANCE IN RESETTLEMENT SCHEME. THIS PROPOSAL NATURALLY CAUSED CONCERN ON THE PART OF PROJECT PERSONNEL AND CONSUL AT LUBUMBASHI WHO ALERTED EMBASSY AND SOUGHT INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEALING WITH SITUATION. EMBASSY UNDERTOOK TO EXPLORE QUESTION WITH GOZ. IN MEANTIME SHABAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES AGREED TO DELAY ANY MOVEMENT OF PRISONERS INTO NORTH SHABA PROJECT AREA AT LEAST UNTIL JUNE 21.
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5. WHEN AMBASSADOR MET WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU ON JUNE 20 HE RAISED SUBJECT OF PROPOSED RESETTLEMENT OF PRISONERS IN NORTH SHABA POINTING OUT DISRUPTIVE POTENTIAL OF THE PROPOSAL FOR IMPORTANT USAID PROJECT. PRESIDENT MOBUTU REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT AUTHORIZED SUCH RESETTLEMENT PLAN AND AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE A BAD IDEA. IN THE AMBASSADOR'S PRESENCE MOBUTU TELEPHONED GENERAL BABIA AND ORDERED THAT INSTRUCTIONS GO OUT IMMEDIATELY TO CANCEL ANY MOVEMENT OF PRISONERS TO NORTH SHABA PROJECT AREA. SUBSEQUENT REPORTING FROM CONSULATE LUBUMBASHI INDICATES THAT AS OF LATE JUNE 21 THERE HAD BEEN NO MOVEMENT INTO THE NORTH SHABA AREA OF PERSONS WHO MIGHT BE CONSIDERED PART OF ANY RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM. AID PROJECT PERSONNEL WERE WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY AND BELIEVED THE PROPOSED RESETTLEMENT HAD BEEN CANCELLED.

6. LUBUMBASHI'S DAILY MJUMBE ON JUNE 21 AND 22 PUBLISHED A LIST OF 419 "IRREGULARS" WHO HAD BEEN APPREHENDED IN MOPPING-UP OPERATIONS. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE NAMES WERE PRINTED TO CALM THE FEARS OF RELATIVES AND TO "PERMIT CORRESPONDENCE." THE SAME ARTICLE NOTED THAT MORE THAN 600 SUSPECTS HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN KOLWEZI AND SAID THAT THERE WERE OTHERS WHO HAD BEEN "INFECTED" BY THE SUSPECTS. THE ARTICLE SAID THAT THESE

PEOPLE CONSTITUTED "HUMAN CAPITAL" AND WOULD BE USED FOR FIELD WORK AT AN INSTRUCTION CENTER AT LUKANDU IN KIVU. LUKANDU MAY BE THE SAME AS LOKANDU (0231S/2547E), THE SITE OF AN OLD MILITARY CAMP 50 KILOMETERS NORTH OF KINDU; THIS COULD SUPPORT STATEMENT BY COLONEL SASSA CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RESETTLEMENT CAMP AT KINDU.

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7. A ROUGH ANALYSIS BY OUR CONSULATE AT LUBUMBASHI OF THE 419 NAMES ON PUBLISHED LIST SHOWS FOLLOWING ESTIMATED BREAKDOWN OF PRESUMED TRIBAL BACKGROUNDS: LUBA-KASAI (31 PER CENT), LUBA-SHABA (16 PER CENT), LUNDA (11 PER CENT), TSHOKWE (5 PER CENT), KANYOKA (7 PER CENT), BEMBA (3 PER CENT), AND OTHER UNKNOWN (5 PER CENT). THIS TRIBAL BACKGROUND DOES NOT SEEM SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM TRIBAL COMPOSITION OF SHABAN MINING TOWNS.

8. SUSPECTS ARE THOUGHT TO BE MOSTLY ABLE-BODIED MEN PICKED UP IN FAZ CORDON-AND-SEARCH OPERATIONS IN KOLWEZI, LIKASI, AND LUBUMBASHI. PRESUMABLY THEY WERE NOT CARRYING ADEQUATE IDENTIFICATION (NEWLY-REQUIRED EMPLOYMENT CARDS) AND DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO PURCHASE THEIR FREEDOM. FOUR SUCH OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN NOTED IN LUBUMBASHI SINCE JUNE 1. SUCH OPERATIONS ARE PRESUMED TO BE MAJOR SOURCE OF "IRREGULARS."

9. ON JUNE 21 ICRC DELEGATE STEINEMANN MET WITH MILITARY
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GOVERNOR SINGA WHO TOLD STEINEMANN THAT ICRC SHOULD NOT WORRY ABOUT PRISONERS BECAUSE THERE WERE NO LONGER ANY UNDER SINGA'S CONTROL; THEY HAD ALL BEEN SENT OUT OF SHABA. STEINEMANN STATED THAT GENERAL BABIA HAD USED TERM "PRISONERS OF WAR" TO DESCRIBE INDIVIDUALS SUSPECTED OF PARTICIPATING IN FLNC FORCE AND TERM "POLITICAL PRISONERS" FOR THOSE PRESUMED COLLABORATORS ARRESTED IN OTHER AREAS WITH QUESTIONABLE IDENTIFICATION PAPERS. STEINEMANN SAID THAT HIS IDENTIFICATION TEAM IN KOLWEZI IS COMPILING A LIST OF PERSONS MISSING AND PRESUMED ARRESTED WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED TO ZAIRIAN AUTHORITIES ALONG WITH A REQUEST TO VISIT SUCH INDIVIDUALS. STEINEMANN BELIEVES THAT ICRC'S ROLE ON PRISONERS IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN ITS RELIEF ACTIVITIES. HE PROMISED TO KEEP OUR CONSULATE INFORMED CONCERNING ICRC FINDINGS.

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